

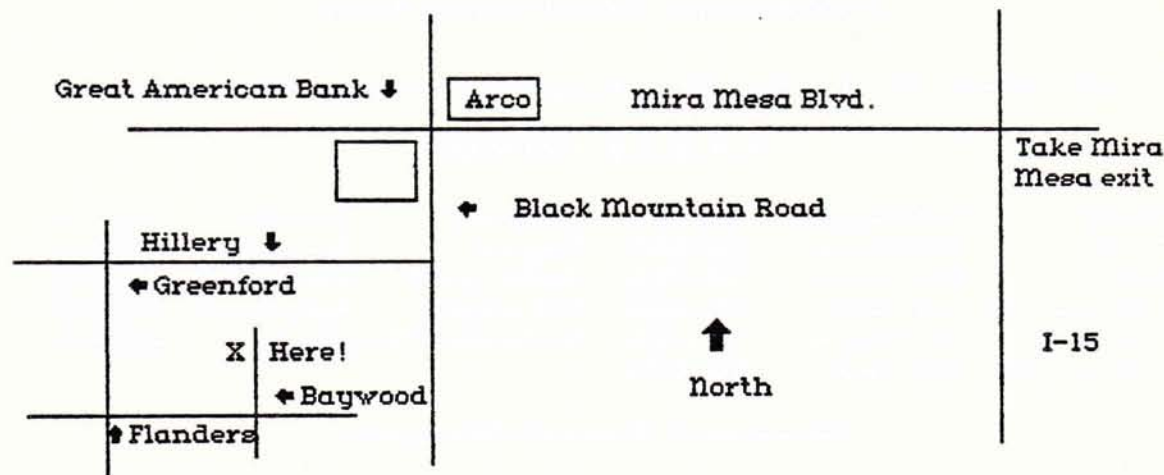


The I/O Connector

The newsletter of the San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts

JUNE 1987

(SDACE * P.O. BOX 203076 * SAN DIEGO * CA * 92120)



This is the location of new 8-bit meeting, in Mira Mesa. Meeting place change will take effect in July, for the July 2nd meeting. Follow map to the X. The new facility, which housed the "North County Meeting" in the past, will allow vendors and sales, and is larger. If a better place can be found, which will be more accessible to those in the South Bay area (we realize it's difficult for those in Chula Vista or San Ysidro to go all the way to Mira Mesa, but no better solution could be found), which allows sales and is free, we would be willing to look into another move. We'll be discussing the possibility of moving the ST meetings to the Mira Mesa facility in the future, if this works out.

Please park along the street, and not in the residential spaces. The only drawback to this location is the lack of decent parking area. Thank you.

Once again, please note that the place will not take effect until **July**. The June meeting will be at the normal facility in North Park. If you have any questions, call the editor. Thanks.

The San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts

(S.D.A.C.E.) is an independant, non-profit organization and user group with no connection to Atari Corp. Membership includes access to the program library, subscription to the **I/O Connector**, and access to any other club activities. Permission to reprint articles from this newsletter in any non-commercial form is permitted without specific authorization, as long as original credit is given.

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Submissions To The Newsletter

are most welcome, and are due by the third Monday of the month, for the next month's newsletter. Mail printed copy or returnable disks with text files (ST single sided format please) to the club's P.O. Box, or upload the file to one of the S.D.A.C.E. bulletin board systems.

Buy/Sell/Trade

ads, available on a space-available basis, are free to club members. The Editor will accept ads at meetings, through the club's P.O. Box, or via telephone. Deadline for classifieds is the same as articles.

Editor's Feedback

From the desk of Yours Truly...

Well, it's me again, typing at ya from behind my ST keyboard. Only this time, instead of working from the ST Writer menu, I'm using the Magic Sac (tm) Mac emulator with a program called Ready Set Go. I intend to use RSG from now on, as I feel it makes the newsletter a lot better (RSG blows Publishing Partner away).

Incidentally, folks, if you're at all interested in learning more about the Magic Sac, by all means, come to the ST Hands On Meeting/Magic Sac SIG meeting, which is held the first Thursday of the month, in the same location as the 8-bit meeting, the meeting hall at the other end of the North Park Rec Center. Also, if you're a new user, or want some help with a programing problem or some-thing along those lines, show up! People just do what they want. Bring your computer, and I'll see you at the next meeting. It's a "free verse" meeting, and there's no agenda, so just show up and jump right into the discussion.

Speaking of 8-bit meeting places, the 8-bit meeting are being moved very soon to Mira Mesa, where the old "North County Meetings" were held (note: not the bungalow facility near the church off of Mira Mesa, where the NC meetings were held before they were moved, see map on the front cover). This location was chosen because 1) it was decided a new place for the 8-bitters to meet would be a boon to that SIG, 2) vendors and sales will be allowed, and 3) a better location could not be found. The new place is very nice, has enough room for our needs, and there is even a pool for anyone who wants to use it. **Note: the June meeting will be held at it's normal place! The change of location does not take effect until the July meeting date on July 2nd!** If the new location works out well and is not too far to drive for some users, we may consider moving all meetings to the Mira Mesa facility, depending on the feedback we get from the membership.

We have a new 8-bit vice president! His name is Ron Miller, and he's an experienced 8-bit user who wants to help get some real life going in the 8-bits again. Please join me in welcoming Ron to the SDACE officers' slate, and let's all help him any way we can. Taking responsibility and stepping forward is not an easy thing to do, so let's support him and the 8-bit SIG. Also, David Becker, the new 8-bit librarian, will be helping the club stay current

in the world of 8-bit PD software. We'll be having at least one new disk of the month for the 8-bitters at the meetings from now on. Not being too optimistic, it looks like the 8-bit computers will be emerging from their slump, as we get some fresh interest in the best little computer in the world.

Guess what? The ST BBS might be getting a cheap Habba 10 meg hard disk to enhance the system and allow more space for files. We're getting a good price on the drive--around \$175--and it will be paid for by the ST membership. It's still up in the air right now, but I'll keep you posted.

I'd like to invite all of you to submit articles to the I/O Connector for publication. I've been editor for almost half a year now, and I've yet to receive any substantial help from the non-officer membership with regards to filling the newsletter. Most of you have probably noticed that an awful lot of the articles in this newsletter are reprinted from other clubs' newsletters. I would just like a little more help, that's all. If you have a software product you can write a review of or an article you want to write, please do so, and drop it in the mail to me via the club's P.O. box. Thanks.

Are you on GENIE? You should be. As a recent subscriber to the General Electric Network for Information Exchange, I can tell you truthfully that it's definitely worth looking at. All you need is a modem (1200 baud strongly recommended) and a brain. You don't even have to pay the \$18 sign-up fee, thanks to an Atari-sponsored program to generate interest from the Atari community. The ST Round Table is the third most active SIG on GENIE (after the Macintosh and IBM PC SIGs), and the Atari 8-bit RT is 5th. It's \$5.00 an hour during non-prime time (after 6) and it is definitely worth it. So sign up and see if you like it, I guarantee you will.

I've probably said this before, but are there enough users of GFA BASIC on the ST to warrant a special group? If so, I'll be happy to organize a GFA SIG. Talk to me at the ST and 8-bit meetings if you're interested or have any input.

Ok, well, I guess I have talked long enough. Until next month, stay safe, and happy computing.

Peter Payne

The Prez Says...

Many changes are a coming. To begin with, we see the loss of another Atari oriented store, Sysware. San Diego can be a tough market for the computer biz. I also suspect that some of the problem is from Atari itself. Atari Corp. may be doing better than in years past, but their support to both the user and the dealer seems to be the same as it was in the olden days.

I really believe that users' groups are the way to go for information. Another recent area of support is coming from third party vendors. If you have a modem, try to get yourself on GENie. Supra, Soft Logik, Data Pacific (makers of the Magic Sao), Michtron, Atari Corp. and many others are online with help and answers.

As you know, the 8-bit SIG will be seeing some great changes very soon. I'm happy to announce that Ron Miller is the new 8-bit Vice President. Ron has vast experience with the 8-bit machines and is the unofficial Crown Prince of the 400. Let's all help Ron out the best way we can. Also, Dave Becker and his wife, Margie, are updating the 8-bit public library and will have at least one new disk of up to date PD software hot off GENie and other places for the Disks of the Month. Finally, the 8-bitters can look forward to some fresh new interest in the SIG.

Of course, the biggest change is the proposed meeting

change starting in July. Check the map on the cover for directions. From what we could tell at the May meeting, most of the 8-bit folks did not feel that Mira Mesa was too far north to travel, and since a more centralized location could not be found, the change was proposed. The advantages to the new place are size, freedom (we're not bound by the North Park Rec Center's tough impositions), and vendors. Yes, bring all your software and hardware for sale, cause now you can.

The ST Beginners' SIG/Magic Sao SIG/ST Workshop is taking off better than expected. That group will continue to meet on the first Thursday of the month at the North Park Rec Center (the same night as the 8-bit SIG), at 6:30 PM. A little bit of everything is tried at the meeting, so bring your questions, concerns, reviews, and don't forget to bring your computer.

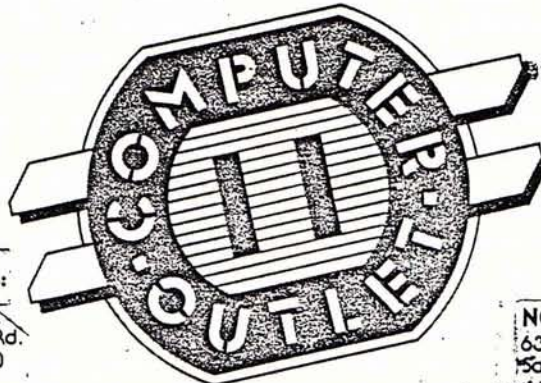
Rumor has it that the ST BBS may be getting a 10 meg hard disk soon. It was heartening to see ST members at the April meeting contribute up to \$75.00 toward this purchase. All I can say is, "Atarians, aren't they great?"

In closing, I would just like to thank all for putting a little extra in during these times of financial troubles. Our bank account is looking good and after a few months, we should be fine. I hope to see all of you at the next meeting, especially the 8-bitters. Later.

Dave Delgadillo

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STuser

January 1987

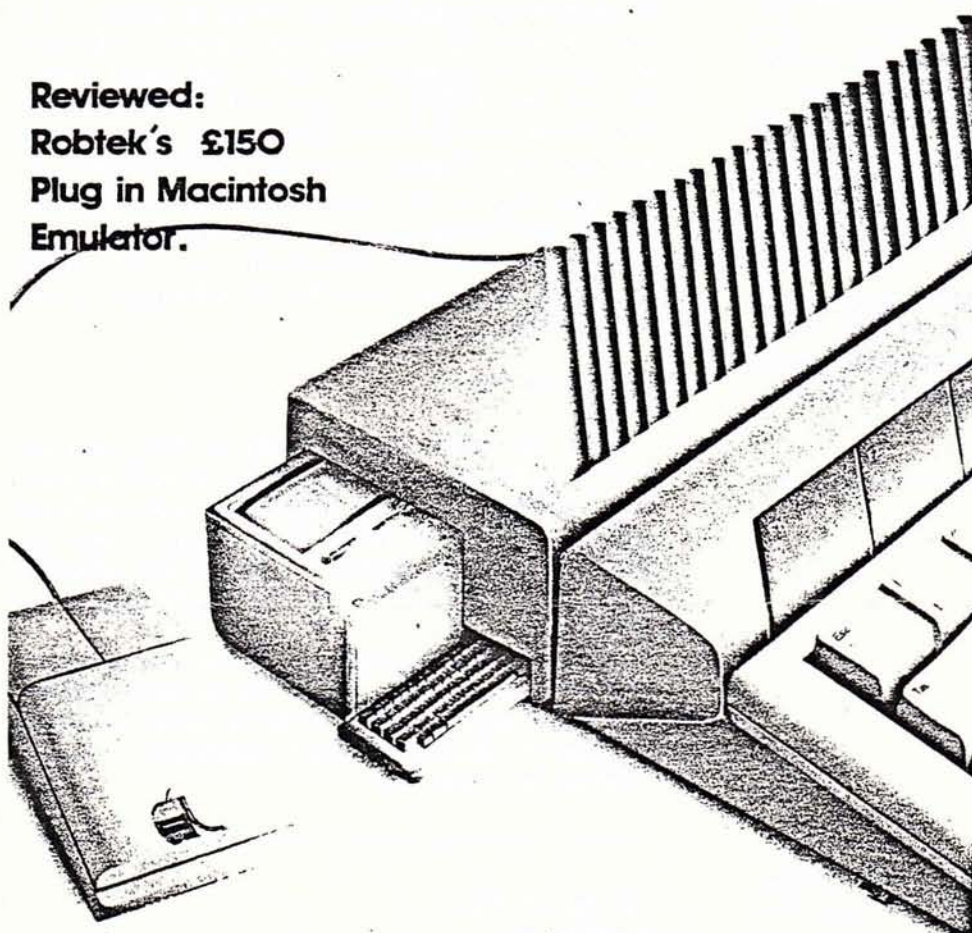
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ST Writer Mail Merge: Let's Give It A Try

Originally By H. B. Monroe
Reprinted from Current Notes

ST Writer is considered the best word processor available for the Atari ST series by many. Seven other programs have been studied but ST Writer always seems to beat them. The reason for this is in part due to the massive features available to ST Writers, such as double column printing, AtariWriter compatibility, Mail Merge, and flexible formatting options. More likely it's the absence of GEM and the slide-bar window editing, which slows down editing to a snail's pace. In any event, we're going to look at how to set up a mail merge in ST Writer.

Many people working with the ST Writer mail merge feature have trouble fine-tuning it to do exactly what they want. Here's a short demo for you to try out. Are you ready? Good.

See the short letter presented below? Suppose you want a copy of this letter to go to three friends: Rick, Dave and Peter. You want the names and addresses to be inserted in the right areas of the letter. Type the following letter in ST Writer:

May 15, 1987

Your name
Your address
City, state, zip

?
?
?

Dear ?,

I'm writing you a form letter using ST Writer's easy to use Mail Merge feature. Thanks for supporting SDACE!

Sincerely,

Your Name

The question marks you see in the letter are actually a mail merge symbol, which appears in red and can be accessed by pressing [F9] (so be sure and use the merge character when typing the letter, and not a question mark character). When this letter is printed, the mail merge symbol tells ST Writer to ask you if you want to enter the variable data (names, addresses, etc.) from the keyboard or from a file (don't print it yet, I'm just telling you what will happen when you do!). If you already have a data file, you would press Y and enter the filename. You would select to print one (1) copy only, as the merge will take data from the data file until it runs out of names and addresses.

Now, save that file, and create a new one. Delete the format line at the top of the file and replace it with the following:

^TO ^BO ^L1 ^Y2

This will set up the merge file so that, when you print it to the disk as an ASCII file, it will not have extra headers, footers, or margins that will play havoc with the merge. ^T (control+T) means a zero line header, ^B zeros the footer, ^L sets the left margin to 1, and ^Y sets the page length to two half-lines, or one line.

In the data file, carriage returns are used to indicate the end of a data record. In your file, no extra text or returns can appear, unless the merge letter is already set up for it; all records must be continuous.

Here's the merge file:

^TO ^BO ^L1 ^Y2<
Rick Dehaven<
80 Track Drive<
San Diego, CA 92100<
ST Vice-President<
Dave Delgadillo<
1 Fleet Street<
San Diego, CA 92100<
Mr. SDACE President
Peter Payne<
10 Tennis Ct.<
San Diego, CA 92124<
Lazy Newsletter Editor<

Note: the "<" symbol indicates a return. Note how I didn't put an extra return in between the names, to

make it look a little clearer, and not so run together. If I had wanted to do this, I would have had to add an extra merge symbol directly above the salutation in the letter above, so that there would not be an extra (blank) record to screw things up.

Once your file is ready, you'll need to print it to the disk. Remember, don't try to use an ST-Writer format document as your data file in the merge: the program will crash and return to the desktop, causing much gnashing of teeth. You must use an ASCII-file for your data file. To print it to the disk, select Print from the menu, D for disk; then enter a file name. When asked, answer yes, you want to print the whole file. The file will then be printed, and everything will be fine. Now, save your data file once more, and go back to your letter. Check it for possible formatting errors and typos (there's nothing worse than completing a 50 address merge only to find you had a typo in the root letter!), and print it, being sure to specify one copy. When the program comes to the first merge symbol, it'll ask you if you want to use data from a file. Answer yes, and type the filename of the ASCII-printed data file (remember, don't use the .STW format file, ST Writer will crash causing much cursing and gnashing of teeth). Now your file should print out three letters, inserting the correct names, addresses, and city/state/zip, and the proper DEAR [title] also. A good idea is to print your letters with the Print to Screen option, to make sure everything is fine with your document before you've committed anything to the printer spooler.

LISTING OF SAN DIEGO AREA ATARI BBSs

Area code 619, 300/1200 BAUD, 24 hours a day
unless otherwise noted

Code	Name	Computer	Baud	Number
1	Sherwood Forest	8-bit	2400	276-5603
1	Polaris	8-bit	300	566-6210
3	The Highlands	8-bit	3/12	298-8475
	The Atari Fortress	8-bit	3/12	426-4253
3	8-bit SDACE	8-bit	3/12	566-3430
1	Penthouse Suite	8-bit	3/12	279-2722
1	Aardvark	8-bit/ST	2400	272-5553
4	ST-SDACE	ST	3/12	284-3821
4	ST MIDI Connection	ST	2400	452-7535
4	! Computer Blvd.	ST	2400	589-0565
4	Computer Plus BBS	ST	3/12	691-7862
4	* Computer Outlet	ST	2400	282-6815

1 = TCxe, 2 = Forem, 3 = BBS Express
4 = Michtron (ST)

(* = Limited hours, != Magic Sao support)

**For corrections or additions, please
contact the editor!**

The Supra 1200AT Modem

Reprinted from The MiAtari Newsletter

Supra's 1200AT modem is one of the three no-interface 1200 baud modems available for the Atari 8-bit (the other two being QMI's Q-Modem and Atari's as-of-yet unreleased unit).

The Supra 1200AT works right from the box, requiring no external interface such as an 850 or a P.R: Connection. The documentation which comes with the modem is mediocre at best—the user is left to guess how the cables should be connected, and how to set the thing up. It was no problem to figure out, but they should provide better documentation. A 9 volt adapter is provided as a power supply (more cords to tangle!).

The software which comes with the modem, Smart-Term, requires a disk drive. The software, which works from a menu, is easy to use, but lacks the features of, say, 850 Express! or TC Modem (both of which are in the public domain—you can substitute them if you get the Hayes modem driver from Supra). 80 columns are supported, as are Xmodem downloads, ASCII support, and others.

Incidentally, the Supra modem is basically an Avatex redesigned. There is a button which selects between 300/1200 baud, just like on an Avatex, and the Avatex sticker is stuck to the bottom (hidden by the Supra sticker). So basically what the 1200AT is is an Avatex 1200 with an interface built in.

Basically, the modem is good. It's pretty much Hayes compatible (yes, it has the S11 feature, which means that you can dial the phone ten times faster than normal, a feature even the Hayes and Mitsuba 2400's do not have), and the software works well enough to use. There is no way to hang up the modem through software—you must press the voice/data switch to do that—but that's not too bad. With a driver available from Supra, the modem can be used with 850 Express!

After about six months of using the Supra 1200AT, I have gotten used to the minor quirks and enjoy using it. At \$160.00, however, it's not the most logical way to go, and I think that prospective modem buyers could do better for less. For example, if you pick up an P.R: Connection (which will interface both a modem and a printer—the AT's interface is modem only), and an Avatex (which are hard to find, but can be had for \$90) or an Avatex HC (which is a 101% Hayes compatible modem, which sells for around \$120-\$150), you'd be better off. Other alternatives include buying an 850 and one of the above modems (850's are considered the Rolls Royce of modem/printer interfaces, and are around \$100), or an ATR-8000 (which, again, is an excellent modem/printer interface, which also has the ability to run true CP/M and generic floppies and hard disks), or go for cheap and get a 300 baud modem (although you'll regret not getting 1200!).

Donald Duck's Playground All It's Quacked Up To Be

ST Review by Bill and Christie Moes
Reprinted from Current Notes

He was born in 1934, during the Great Depression. Toughness, that's what it took to make it through a time like that. Let 'em know you're there. And he did, rising to stardom and becoming one of the best known and most popular screen figures of all time. Frustrated, ornery, loud-mouthed, and irascible, he had one other quality: he was lovable. All of that was—and is—Donald Duck.

Donald Duck's Playground, a software program for the ST, presents Disney's cartoon character in a somewhat varied light. Hardworking, Donald must earn money and then purchase playground equipment for his three nephews. The change-making process, the primary educational goal of the program, is skillfully presented at the stores as you make your own change for the purchase.

This is a program that the targeted age group (ages 7-11 years old) should find to be a challenging and enjoyable experience. It's one my 11-year-old daughter, who (she claimed) already knows how to make change, greatly enjoyed.

In the game, the player chooses which level he or she wants to play at: beginner, intermediate or advanced.

There are three places to work in order to earn the money needed to purchase the playground equipment for Donald's nephews: a toy store, a train depot, or a produce stand. The player goes to work, playing each scenario, and earns money. Each place stresses a different skill in a semi-arcade fashion.

One thing players learn in this game, although they may not be aware of it, is the real-world aspects developed into the game. If you want more money, you have to work harder. It's advantageous to work on something for which you have some talent. And if you want to make it to some recreation, your own effort will dictate the amount of fun available. (At least these are real-world concepts for us idealists).

The player has the option of using the keyboard, joystick or the mouse. The joystick seems to work the best, although it must be plugged into port zero, where the mouse usually goes (Micky has asked that we make no mouse jokes). This is especially a problem for 1040 users, but it's not too hard to live with, and joystick cable extenders can be found in any Radio Shack, which will solve the problem.

In low resolution, the graphics are colorful and bold, although there is not much real detail. The program also works in monochrome, so anyone can use it.

The \$24.95 program, made by the makers of Winnie the Pooh, Sierra, presents Disney characters in a quality, clean fashion. I thought it was definitely worth the investment, and I am glad I found this program.

Macintosh Emulation: Finally a Reality!

By Phillip S. Gallo Jr., PhD

Rick DeHaven has asked me to write some notes regarding my experiences with the Magic Sac. I am in somewhat of a unique position to write such a review, since I own both a 1 meg 520ST and a 512K enhanced Macintosh. The two computers sit in my den virtually side by side, casting suspicious glances at each other. As a consequence, I have gained some reasonable insight into the mysterious inner workings of the Mac, and I can port software over to the ST in a flash and try it out. I should point out that there is quite a long review of the Magic Sac, written by Bob Kelly, on the SDACE ST BBS, and I urge everyone with a modem to read it. It goes into far greater detail than I will be able to do in this space. There are some errors, which I will attempt to address in this article, but for the most part it is excellent. Without further ado, here are some answers to the questions that people most often ask me.

How good is the emulation? - Quite good. One thing that needs to be kept in mind is that the Magic Sac emulates a Macintosh that is no longer being made. The ROMs and the appropriate system files that work with these ROMs are the ones from the original 128K Mac and the 512K "Fat" Mac. Neither of these machines is currently being made. They featured 64K ROMs, 400K drives that were very slow at I/O operations, and a CPU that ran at about 6 mhz. The present Macs (512K and Mac Plus) have 128K ROMs, a new heirarchical disk file structure, fast 800K drives, and a CPU that runs about 8 mhz. When David Small, creator of the Magic Sac, waxes enthusiastic about how much faster the emulation is than a real Mac, take it with a grain of salt. CPU speed is 20% faster than the old Macs, but the Magic Sac's disk I/O is even slower than the old 400K Mac drives. And the Mac spends a lot of time talking to its disk drives. The Mac Plus or 512K will run rings around the Magic Sac. The emulation is slow, but it is certainly useable, and is comparable to a "Fat" Mac.

How much does one have to know about the Mac? - A whole bunch. Because the Mac and the ST share a mouse, an icon oriented interface, pointing, clicking, double clicking, and dragging, people tend to assume they are more alike than they really are. The Magic Sac is not really emulating a Mac, it's turning the ST into a Mac. With one exception that the ST can't eject it's own disks, the emulation is almost exactly like a real Mac. Here are a couple of examples of the differences between the two machines. Most of us keep our ST program disks locked to prevent accidental change or damage to the files. You cannot use a locked disk with the Magic Sac. Back in the days of the woefully memory shy 128K Mac, a tradition of

programming developed in which operations that normally would occur in memory were written to temporary files on the disk. In addition, the Mac spools all of its print files to disk. So you can't lock your disks, and you had better have at least 25K, preferably 50K, free on each disk for the temporary files and print spooling. Another difference: although two disk drives make life easier with an ST, it will perform quite adequately with one drive. Try using a single drive with a Mac (or Magic Sac) and you'll throw the whole thing up against the wall in sheer frustration after a couple hours. Get a very simple beginners book about the Mac and do some homework in order to get the most out of the Magic Sac. Many of the complaints about the Magic Sac are really the result of people not understanding how a Macintosh works.

When will it be able to print real Mac fonts and graphics? - Right now. David Small is negotiating with a Canadian company, GDS Software, to bundle their Epson printer driver with the next update of the Magic software. However, despite statements you may have read to the contrary, Epstart Version 1.0 will permit the Magic Sac to print flawlessly (well, almost flawlessly) to an Epson compatible printer. Graphics programs such as MacPaint print best in what is known as "standard" mode. No problem here. Text needs to be printed in "high quality" mode which requires a double pass by the print head. The Epstart driver increases the width of each line by 20% over what would occur on the Imagewriter. The result is beautiful quality print which is a little stretched out. With text alone, the fix is to just modify your margins. When text and graphics are mixed, the graphics do look a bit wide, but the overall effect is still generally very pleasing. I don't know whether this represents a bug in Epstart, a bug in the emulation, or a basic incompatibility between the dot densities of the Imagewriter as compared to an Epson printer. I can personally vouch that it will print on the Citizen MSP 20, the Star Gemini NX10, and the Panasonic 1091. I strongly suspect that there are a number of other printers that will work as well. The only printers it has failed with are the Okidata's and C. Itoh's older Prowriter series.

While in Magic Sac mode, can I access a Mac BBS and download PD software that is immediately useable? - No Problem.

Is the emulation that runs on the color monitor as useless as they say? - It depends. If you use it just as it comes, with red, green, white and black all smeared together on the screen, it is. However, there is enough memory left over in a 1 meg machine (the only one the color emulation will run on, not a 512K) that an Atari Control Panel can be put on the Magic Sac boot disk. If you change red to black (0,0,0) and green to grey (3,3,3), and save the desktop for future use, you will have a screen that is reasonably legible, not much worse than some ST programs. For light word processing, printing out posters, signs and graphics, it is quite useable (this review was written on a color

monitor with MacWrite). For serious work, you will want the monochrome monitor (editor's note: the color emulation is slower than the standard monochrome, but is useable. The new version of the software supports split-screen, so no loss of readability exists. But take my word for it, you will definitely want to get a monochrome monitor).

When will the Magic Sac be a true clone? - Bob Kelly says by this summer. I say probably never. Everyone agrees that there will have to be either a hardware modification to existing drives, or new drives will have to be produced, in order for the ST to read the idiosyncratic Mac format. David Small is currently working on an I/O device which will connect in between your ST and your disk drive, which will alter the frequency of the data being sent to the computer from the disk drive. The result will be that the ST will be able to read all unprotected Mac disks, and even some protected ones. There is no speculation as to how much this device will cost. In addition, 800K drives are now supported (double sided SF314's), and hard disk support should be included in the next update.

With all of its problems, is the Magic Sac really worth buying? - Absolutely, positively, beyond the shadow of a doubt! With a few exceptions, Mac software is superb. Only the top 1 to 2% of ST software can hold a candle to it. They have been at it a lot longer than we have. ST software is catching up, but there will always be things the Mac can do better than the ST, just like there will always be things the ST can do better than the Mac. How many people, besides ST owners, can own an ST and a Mac for less than the price of a Mac alone? With all the bugs, and the fact that it will only run about 50% of Mac software, it is worth having. It will double your enjoyment of computing.

Editor's Note: recent fixes and breakthroughs in the emulation have increased the number of programs that will run with the Magic Sac, and the list of programs that run is very long. The compatibility should be approaching 80-95% percent in the next software update. Take it from me, folks, it is definitely worth having. Ready Set Go (which is being written on the ST, by the way) creams Publishing Partner thoroughly, and I wouldn't use anything else. If you're serious about computing, go to the ST Workshop meeting.

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STEVE LAWRENCE

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ST SIG

Rick DeHaven says...

It's now the very last day in May and in the news for S.D.A.C.E. is a new hard-disk for the club's ST BBS.

An inexpensive source for the older Haba-disk was found. The fact that we could buy a 10 megabyte hard-disk for around \$150 was astounding. News of this deal surfaced at the last ST-SIG meeting and a collection was taken up for the purchase of the hard-disk. In all, over \$60 was raised to go towards the drive. I have checked into the compatibility of the drive for use on the BBS and was told that a Haba-disk had been in use with the Michtron BBS software for several month's with no problems at all. Good news indeed.

The Summer CES show is going on at the this moment. Not too much news as yet from the show, only word is that a math co-processor board for the ST using the 68881 chip is being shown. No firm price or date available. \$700-800 would be a good guess at the price, most of the cost in the 68881 chip itself.

Latest rumours are that the Mega-ST's are shipping now to Europe. This was to be expected, the reason is the same as the last time. To sell computers in the US you must have it approved by the FCC. This process takes 90 days. Atari can sell units in Europe now while the Mega's await approval. Available first, the Mega-4 will mostly likely not have blitter chip in them. The reason is that they will be in short supply at first. No details of any plans to offer them as a low cost upgrade (like TOS ROM's) or no cost upgrades. The ROM's in the blitter machines will have an additional selection under the 'Options' menu on the desktop. You will be able to switch off the blitter for those programs that refuse to work properly with it installed. In addition I have been told by Neil Harris that there is an XBIOS call that will allow you to turn it off and on from within a program.

Mega-2 should arrive shortly afterwards with the planned Mega-1 being scrapped. This I feel is a smart move. The 1040ST is a solid value and another 1meg machine would only confuse the issue even more. I have not heard any firm pricing on the new machines as yet.

While on the subject of new machines Atari has slipped a new one in on us with out any of the 'dry-testing' and with out fan fare. The new and improved 520STfm. The new 520 is now built like the 1040 computer, one piece now with the (still) single-sided drive built in. Still with 512K of ram and with composite and RF outputs as well. The 520STfm mother board is identical to that in the 1040. Even the holes for the second bank of 256K RAM chips is there. I doubt it'll be too long before we see 520STfm+'s since

it appears that the upgrades will be rather easy to complete. I want to know when Atari will add the 'm' to the 1040. I know that quite a few buyers would love to have the RF and composite outputs so that they could record the output or display it on a larger screen.

Migraph has released 2 new fonts and a 24 pin printer driver for Easy Draw. The main benefit is that it prints quite a bit quicker, needing only 1 pass now to print a line opposed to 2 passes with a 9 pin printer. \$19.99 for the printer driver and \$29.99 (hearsay) for the new fonts.

CAD 3D 2.0 is out! I've been waiting for this one for a long time. In addition to all the new things that 2.0 does you also get the Cybermate animation language. A super deal at \$89.99.

Magic Sac Version 4.32 was released fixxing a host of problems. This thing is getting real good!

I'm sorry to have to say that San Diego has lost one of its original ST supporting stores. Sysware closed its doors for the last time on Saturday 5/30. Their contributions to the ST community will be missed. I wish the best of luck to those that were involved.

Anyways that about wraps it up for this month. Remember if you hear something let me know about it so I can get the word out. The more informed we are the better we are.

Rick DeHaven

Schedule

8-bit and ST Workshop: First Thursday of the month. ST SIG: Third Monday of the month.

June - 8-bit meeting and ST Workshop will be on Thursday, June 4th, at the North Park Rec Center, on Idaho off of University, at 6:30. ST meeting will be at the North Park Rec Center at 6:30.

July - 8-bit meeting will be at the NEW facility in Mira Mesa, at 6:30 on July 2nd. ST Workshop will be that night also, but over at the Nort Park Rec Center where is has been meeting. The ST meeting will be July 20th, at the Rec Center, at 6:30.

Note: There are two ends to the North Park Rec Center, if you don't find a meeting at one end, try the other end.

Atari Amateur Radio Interaction

by Ed Glambotski

Reprinted from SLO-POKES

The question often comes up: what else can we do with our Atari computer besides games? Perhaps we use that question in an attempt to justify having a home computer. On the other hand, it may be a continuing challenge and excuse to play with these expensive toys. Regardless of the personal drive, **Packet Radio** is another fun utility for the computer. What is **Packet Radio**, you ask? Well, let me lay it on you.

Packet Radio is a utility whereby the computer interacts with an amateur radio transceiver. Don't stop reading because you are not a Ham radio operator, because this is technologically interesting in the work a computer does for you when thus programmed.

Packet Radio is a fancy form of radio-teletype. It requires your Atari computer, a packet control unit (called TNC, and commercially available at a number of third party companies), and an amateur transceiver. A disk drive and a printer are helpful, but not essential. **Packet Radio** gets its name from the fact that each transmission consists of a "packet" of digital data, including call signs or the originating station, the destination station, and any relaying stations in between.

There's virtually no interface. When you're connected with someone, your TNC will recognize and

interpret only those packets addressed to you. You'll hear the others going by, but nothing will show on your screen. Since each packet is a brief burst, there's room in between your packets for the packets of other stations. So, one frequency can support several messages simultaneously (time sharing). The TNC will also ignore any packet that doesn't "add up right". Part of the coding in each packet is a "checksum" that your computer reads. If the packet is garbled in any way, the checksum will be wrong and your TNC will refuse it. Okay, now what do we do this lashup for?

All this adds up to a system for message transfer virtually error free for at least the following tasks:

- * Packet Bulletin Board Systems of any distance, leaving out Ma Bell (and her tab).

- * Electronic Mail--sent/received - during these activities, you need not be at the station at the time of transmission. Emergency traffic (fire, earthquake, etc.) information can be sent error free.

- * Up/downloading computer programs.

In summery, I might say the user can transfer information between stations without the need of the telephone system (twisted pair) at a baud rate of 9600.

Amateurs are using this means internationally now, and it is just a matter of time before CB Radio users take off with it also.

June 1987

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 8-bit/ ST Wkshp	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 ST SIG	16	17	18	19	20 SD Comp Socety
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 1987

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			1	2 8-bit/ ST Wkshp	3	4
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

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June 8-bit meeting & ST Workshop will be Thursday, June 4th, 6:30, in North Park (not in Mira Mesa). ST meeting will be Monday June 15th, 6:30.

July 8-bit meeting will be Thursday, July 2nd, at the new meeting place in Mira Mesa. ST Workshop will be same place it has been, in North Park, opposite end of park from where the ST SIG meets. Same time, different places. Normal ST meeting will be July 20th, at 6:30.